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SUBJECT: U.S.- RUSSIA JOINT THREAT ASSESSMENT TALKS

Classified By: ISN Acting A/S Vann H. Van Diepen.
Reason: 1.5 (D).

(U) Summary

11. (S) A U.S. interagency team -- led by ISN Acting Assistant Secretary Vann H. Van Diepen -- met with a Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs-only team, led by Ambassador Anatoly Antonov, Director for Security and Disarmament Affairs (participants list at para 11), on July 29, 2009 to discuss what the U.S. side considered to be the first round of a Joint Threat Assessment (JTA), as agreed by Presidents Obama and Medvedev in the 2009 U.S.-Russia Summit Joint Statement on Missile Defense Issues. Russia made clear that it viewed the meeting as a preliminary discussion only, and frequently noted that there would be no cooperation on the JTA until the U.S. addressed Russian concerns regarding the 3rd Missile Defense site in Europe. The U.S. side nevertheless presented its analysis of the Iranian and North Korean missile programs and attempted to elicit a Russian response. The Russian side remained largely unresponsive, and the meeting concluded in two hours. End summary.

(U) Opening remarks

12. (S) After introductions of the U.S. and Russian delegations, Antonov explained that Russia viewed this discussion as a preliminary meeting only and said the two sides should just discuss their respective plans on how to conduct this joint missile assessment. He noted his surprise in learning that a special team of missile experts had been dispatched from the U.S. at this time, especially given that this is the dead season (vacation time) in Russia. He also stressed that he wanted to be crystal clear that there would be no future cooperation from Moscow until the U.S. addressed Russian concerns on the 3rd Missile Defense site in Europe (Antonov returned to this theme over and over during the two-hour talks). Russia had not changed its position on the 3rd site in East Europe close to its borders.

13. (S) Van Diepen countered that the U.S. was making presentations on the missile threat pursuant to the JTA as agreed to by our two Presidents in the July 6, 2009 Summit Joint Statement, and not on Missile Defense. He stated that the U.S. delegation had come to Moscow to present U.S. perspectives on the Iranian and North Korean missile programs, listen to Russia's reactions to the presentations, and answer any questions. Van Diepen further noted that the U.S. would also like to use the meeting to develop a concrete plan on next steps.

14. (S) Stating that he was not rejecting the U.S. presentations, Antonov again went on at length about Russian concerns on the 3rd site, inquiring about the state of play of U.S. consultations with Allies and intentions toward the 3rd site. Antonov said that his reading of the Summit Joint

Statement (which he took credit for authoring) made clear the 3rd site issue was paramount. Antonov highlighted the sentence in the first paragraph of the statement regarding "mutual respect and interests" (which he equated with Russian 3rd site concerns), and noted that we needed to deal with this issue before any movement on the bilateral measures in the 2nd paragraph or the multilateral issues in the 3rd paragraph could happen. Antonov also expressed disappointment that the U.S. had not responded to the Russian positions explained in the March 2009 Aide Memoire, theatrically asking how Russia is supposed to understand the silence and the lack of U.S. reaction to Russian concerns. He then reiterated the view that there will be no cooperation until Russia receives clear answers on the 3rd site. It was up to the U.S. to decide if it wanted a partner. He added that the U.S. attempting to "impose cooperation" on Russia is a mistake. Finally, he said that it was impossible to accept an increase in the security of the U.S. with a consequent decrease in Russian security.

15. (S) Van Diepen responded that the JTA exercise has a straightforward purpose -- to analyze the ballistic missile challenges as noted in the Summit Joint Statement. He explained that the U.S. does not share the sentiment that the U.S. is somehow "imposing cooperation" on Russia, and noted that success in this assessment will be dependent on the cooperation of both sides. The discussion of the missile threat plays a part in a larger picture, and the U.S. is prepared to discuss its perceptions of that threat.

16. (S) Antonov repeated his earlier statements about the 3rd site, noting that the "3rd site is the threat, not Iran." He stated that it was not acceptable to pull one sentence from the Joint Statement and work on that basis. He also could not agree with the U.S. perception of the JTA, and reiterated his request for a response to Russia's 3rd site concerns. Antonov stated that his message was clear and asked that it be relayed to the leadership in Washington.

17. (S) After both sides again reiterated their respective positions, Antonov again made clear his disagreement with the U.S. approach, asked for the U.S. position on the 3rd site, and questioned the meaning of "missile threat." "For us there is no threat," he exclaimed. He opined that "threat" equals "risk of proliferation plus intention," and disagreed that Iran's missile program posed a threat to Russia, Europe, or the U.S. He stated that there was no missile threat from Iran. Rather, Iran was trying to solve a regional issue and would surely face strong retaliation from others if it launched its missiles. Antonov said the Summit Joint Statement on Missile Defense Issues is "very rich" and simply references "ballistic missile challenges." Russia views this initial meeting as preparatory to a future dialogue and an understanding of each other's positions.

(U) U.S. presentations

18. (S) The U.S. side then delivered detailed presentations on the Iranian and North Korean missile programs. The Russian side asked a few questions related to the degree of Chinese missile-related assistance to Iran, Iran's ability to series-produce the BM-25, the number of missiles in Iran's and North Korea's inventory (Antonov Deputy and Russian Missile Technology Control Regime head of delegation Grigory Mashkov noted the Russian belief that Israel has the strongest missile potential in the Middle East), Iran's industrial base for missile production, the satellite-launch aspects of the DPRK April 2009 TD-2 launch (as well as the reasons for its failure), and what was new in the U.S. presentations compared to previous ones. The Russian side offered no equivalent program description or presentations, clearly avoiding any detailed discussion relating to JTA in the absence of resolution of the 3rd site issue and underscoring its view of the preliminary nature of the meeting.

(U) Next steps

¶9. (S) Van Diepen then addressed next steps, suggesting that the Russian side study the U.S. presentations and come prepared at the next meeting to offer its own views of the Iranian and North Korean missile programs. The U.S. side can then react to Russia's presentations in order to develop a sense of where we agree and disagree, as well as the reasons for any disagreements. Van Diepen also stated that the U.S. would come prepared to provide more fulsome responses to the issues Russia had raised regarding the U.S. presentations.

¶10. (S) Antonov repeated his earlier 3rd site concerns and view that cooperation on this assessment will not be forthcoming until the U.S. addresses those concerns. The JTA will not matter without consideration for Russia's principal issues; the Summit Joint Statement is a package and requires reciprocity. He also stated that President Medvedev had made a huge concession to the U.S. in the Joint Statement by deleting any specific reference to the 3rd site. Van Diepen noted that the U.S. had come to Moscow in good faith and had done its part in implementing this first step. He also proposed meeting again in September to continue the Joint Threat Assessment. Antonov concluded by stating that he would inform ministers and do the necessary reports, but he could not commit to another meeting given that most of the leadership was on vacation.

¶11. (U) Participants

¶A. (SBU) Russian

Ambassador Anatoly Antonov, Director for Security and Disarmament Affairs, MFA

Grigory Mashkov, Deputy Director for Security and Disarmament Affairs, MFA

Vladimir Leontiev, Senior Counselor for Security and Disarmament Affairs, MFA

Alexander Shilin, Counselor for North America, MFA

Andrey Grebenshchikov, Third Secretary for Security and Disarmament Affairs, MFA

Andrey Malyugin, Third Secretary for Security and Disarmament Affairs, MFA

¶B. (SBU) U.S.:

Vann H. Van Diepen, Acting Assistant Secretary, State/ISN

Ralph Palmiero, Deputy Director for Missile Threat Reduction, State/ISN/MTR

Matt Hardiman, Foreign Affairs Officer, European and Eurasian Affairs, State/EUR/PRA

Michael Kerley, Foreign Affairs Officer, Missile Threat Reduction, State/ISN/MTR

Phil Jamison, OSD Missile Defense Policy

COL Timothy Shea, OSD Regional Policy

Daniel Menzel, Intelligence Analyst

Nickolas Katsakis, Control Officer, US Embassy Moscow

LTC Michael Nerstheimer, Assistant Army Attache, US Embassy Moscow

Yuri Shkeyrov, Interpreter
CLINTON